

HELLO AGAIN

VOL. 19 NO. 5

SEP-OCT 1988

A PERSONAL NOTE: This is just a reminder that I don't necessarily support or oppose ideas and comments written by other people that I include in HA. I specifically refer to the two opposing viewpoints about broadcasting radio shows and Charles Michelson that appeared in the last two issues of HA. They are the opinions of Charles Michelson and the anonymous writer and not necessarily of this publication.

CRAIG and ROBIN, my two children whom I have mentioned in Hello Again off and on for 19 years, are married or are getting married. Craig, 23, lives in Kansas City and got married to Kim on Sep. 10th. Craig is president of Hickerson Cable Installation Inc. and has 100 men working for him in 5 states installing cable tv...Robin, 24, lives in Albany and is getting married to Neil on Jan. 1. Robin runs the Albany and Saratoga Springs branch of the business and takes care of all the financial records.

BILLS for renewal are now enclosed. If a bill is enclosed, payment is due for more issues.

CONVENTION '88: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Additional guests tentatively coming are Hildegard, Bob Hastings (Archie Andrews), Charlotte Manson, Sybil Trent, Peg Lynch, Arthur Anderson, John Archer and Florence Williams...Kirk Alyn may not be able to attend our convention...There are 46 dealers tables available. As of Sep 16th, they are all taken...Tentative plans are underway to have Dick Osgood give an informal talk on Thursday or Friday night...It would make things a lot easier if **ALL REGISTRATION** monies are received before the convention. The registration table area gets quite hectic at times and this will make things a little easier for those at the table.

Our convention program will be much smaller this year, but ads will be accepted to offset the cost of printing it and to help pay for the many guests that are attending. A full-page ad is \$60, a half-page ad is \$40, a quarter-page ad or less is \$20. Size of the program is 8 1/2 by 11. All ad contents must be camera ready. I must receive them by Oct. 10th...We will also have a raffle this year with several radio-related prizes to be given out. Raffle tickets will be sold in the dealers room at the second table on the left (FOTR Table). If you wish to donate prizes, please let me know. You must be present Saturday night to be eligible for a prize. Money from this and the sale of pictures of some of our guests, shirts and pins will also help pay for the many guests that we have at our conventions.

James Albert, 2732 Queensboro Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15226 (412) 343-5235 is looking for someone to share a room with at the convention.

If you are coming Thursday, I must know your choice of food (London broil, chicken cordon bleu or stuffed filet of sole).

There has been a suggestion to have a workshop - panel on broadcasting radio shows and legal (copyright) aspects. If you want to participate, please let me know. If we have enough interest, it will be held on Friday at about 1:15.

RADIO IS ALIVE AND WELL: ZPPR Productions entered its second season with NPR's NPR PLAYHOUSE beginning in August. They will have 5 new shows in its mystery/suspense series "Little Chills"...The top five network radio programs are all different Paul Harvey broadcasts according to Broadcasting (Aug 22). The most listened to show is Paul Harvey News at 8:30 a.m., Monday through Friday, on ABC radio. It has about 6,000,000 listeners.. On Sunday, October 30th, NPR will air "War of the Worlds," a new production broadcast from George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch. Among the actors of this updated version will be Jason Robards, Steve Allen and Douglas Edwards...CHARLES MICHELSON is now offering "Lights Out," "Abbott and Costello," "Captain Horatio Hornblower" and Stuart Hamblen's

"Cowboy Church of the Air."...For those with satellite dishes, tune in Satcom 4, Transponder 15, Audio 6.2. This is Yesterday USA Superstation. It has OTR and vintage music 24 hours a day. For the current program guide, write Bill Bragg, 2001 Plymouth Rock, Richardson, TX 75081. Some of the hosts are Bob Burnham, Carl Amari, Bob Proctor, Tom Heathwood, John and Larry Gassman...Producer Himan Brown's "Mystery Theater" series, formerly on CBS in the '70s and early '80s, has been revived by CapCities-owned WABC-AM New York for a fall debut (Variety, Sep 7).

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED: The JACK BENNY TIMES, May-Jun; articles on Dennis Day and George Balzer...Jul-Aug; continuation of article on George Balzer...OLD-TIME RADIO DIGEST, Jul-Aug; article on Mary and Jim Jordan...METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON OTR CLUB NEWSLETTER, Aug-Sep, article on the Lone Ranger. Also there is an interview with Jim Hickman who has had an OTR show in the Washington, DC area since February 1964.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES: CARLTON E. MORSE'S new book is out. It is "The One Man's Family Album," an inside and complete look at One Man's Family. Cost is \$8.95 plus \$1.50 for postage and handling. Write to Seven Stones Press, Star Route Box 50, Woodside, CA 94062..."Great Radio Personalities," by Anthony Slide, formerly published by Dover, has been reissued by Gotham's Vestal Press...GARY YOGGY, 72 Bissell Ave., Corning, NY 14830 has recently written a 26-page article on the War of the Worlds. It will appear in the Old-time Radio Digest. If you want a copy, you can send Gary \$5.00 to cover copying and mailing. Gary will present excerpts of this article at the FOTR Convention.

CONVENTIONS: SPERDVAC'S annual convention is Nov 11-12. All information is on the flyer enclosed.

LOGS: RAY STANICH, 173 Columbia Hts., Brooklyn, NY 11201 has 2 new logs; SILVER THEATER (\$2.50) and TO THE PRESIDENT (SASE)... DICK HAYES, 59 Myrtle Ave., Cranston, RI 02910 has complete Kate Smith log for \$20. Dick reminds us that Kate Smith introduced "God Bless America" on Nov. 10th, 1938.

CATALOGS AND NEW SHOWS: BRC PRODUCTIONS (BOB BURNHAM), Box 2634, Livonia, MI 48151. Many new shows in this cassette catalog including many new "Challenge of the Yukon"...KEN NEAL, Box 911, Washington, DC 20044 has a new supplement which brings his collection to over 4000 reels. Ken, after being out of the hobby for several years, is anxious to resume trading with his old friends and any new ones that wish to exchange catalogs...NORMAN HALVERSON, 7011 Harbor Dr., Pentwater, MI 49449 has many 16" discs which he would like to dispose of including 3 "Breakfast Club," 10 "Life Can Be Beautiful," 22 "Today's Children," 17 "Women in White," 21 "Guiding Light," 20 "Jack Kirkwood Show" and other miscellaneous discs. He also has a lathe-type recorder that cuts or records these 16" discs plus several blank 16" discs. He will accept a reasonable offer.

THE TAPE DECK: Unfortunately, some people edit OTR shows, either after they get them from somebody else or when they taped them off the air. The result is usually a mess. The quality is poor with the editing obviously present. Not only that, commercials, credits, openings and closings as well as part of the programs themselves are usually omitted or clipped. These programs then get traded or sold. **KEEP THE PROGRAMS COMPLETE.**

NEW FRIENDS AND RETURNEES: RICHARD COLAVECHIO, 1801 Hartranft St., Philadelphia, PA 19145...GEORGE EDWARDS, 186 Riveredge Rd., Tenafly, NJ 07670. George did a lot of radio work in New York, especially at WQXR since 1948...DR. ALLEN SILVERSTEIN, 215 Blauvelt Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423...MARK JOHNSON, 422 Main St., Oakville, CT 06779...BILL PALMER, 328 W 86th St., NYC, NY 10024...JOSEPH ABEND, 870 Seventh Ave., 27th Floor, NYC, NY 10019...ROBERT ROVINSKY, 231 Thurber Rd., Duluth, MN 55803...MARK CUCCIA, 4710 Wright Rd., New Orleans, LA 70128. Mark is looking for many radio and tv logs including (tv) Jack Benny, Trouble with Father; (radio and tv) Ozzie and Harriet, Our Miss Brooks, My Friend Irma; (radio) December Bride, Blondie, The

Whistler. Send a SASE to Mark for a complete list of log wants...FLETCHER MARKLE. Mr. Markle produced and directed "Studio One" and "Ford Theater."...DALE HILK, 424 East 1st St, Waconia, MN 55387...INA GOLDSTEIN, 4421 Linnean Ave., Washington, DC 20008.. STEVEN WINDERBAUM, 400 Central Park West #1H, NYC, NY 10025...LESLIE FEAGAN, 8W 86th St #4A, NYC, NY 10024.

OLD FRIENDS: MARTY WEINHOUSE has been taping programs for the Lighthouse for the Blind and suggest that others do the same. It would make a lot of sightless people very happy.

IN FOND MEMORY: GEORGE BROADBENT, Jul 16, 83; organist (Old Fashioned Revival Hour)...BETTY WHITE KOCH, Jun 26, 60; pop singer (Club Time)...JIMMIE FIDLER, Aug 9, 89; controversial Hollywood gossip columnist; on network radio from 1934 - 1950...JACK DREES, Jul 27, 71; tv and radio sports broadcaster...IRVING MANSFIELD, Aug 25, 80; producer and writer (Arthur Godfrey's talent Scouts)...ROBERT BRICKWEDDE, Aug 20, 73; WXYZ-AM announcer for "The Green Hornet" and "The Lone Ranger." (Nothing is mentioned about him in any of the reference books)...LEO ROSENBERG, Sep 5, 92; Rosenberg was the announcer of the Harding-Cox election returns on Nov. 2, 1920 on KDKA-AM Pittsburgh.

* * * * *

JAY HICKERSON, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514 (203) 248-2887 \$10/year

The Format That Wouldn't Die

By PHILIP K. EBERLY

Former radio broadcaster and author of "Music In The Air: America's Changing Taste In Popular Music"

Three decades after its introduction, with hundreds of stations slugging it out (using dozens of format approaches), Top 40 has been born again in all major media markets. In the majority of those listening venues, audiences are ranking the Top 40 formatted station one, two or three as their musical preference.

Jim Duncan, whose American Radio tracks format popularity by crunching the numbers from Arbitron's nationwide ratings data, reveals in his latest compilation (fall, 1987) that Top 40 is now the second leading musical choice, attracting 14.05% of the nation's radio listeners. (Others in the first five: Adult Contemporary-17.1%; Album Oriented Rock-12.9%; Country and Black/Urban are tied at 10.41%.)

But A Different Animal

Top 40 Radio, circa 1988 — also called Contemporary Hit Radio (CHR) — is certainly a different animal than it was three decades ago. Today's version is wall-to-wall music. There are no pretensions of the "full service" and information amenities offered by its 1958 counterpart.

Thirty years ago, Top 40 meant, in addition to music, regularly scheduled newscasts — some even heavy with issues at times — encased in a mounting of bells, whistles and gongs. But the news was there, heralded with some pure, undefiled Top 40 hype, "FIRST NEWS FIRST!"

If the "straight-ahead" primal rock 'n' roll tunes spun on Top 40 Radio in 1958 posed a jarring contrast to the "pretty" melodies and harmonies that had prevailed in the air since the early 1920s, today's tunes differ from the early days of rock because of technological advances.

Also, the process of determining those 40 top hits each week has markedly improved since 1958. Long gone are the spot checks with record stores, the questionable listener-request tote board and the program director's gut-feeling. In their place are sophisticated methodologies, including "call-out" research, scientific polling and focus groups.

Jocks More 'Natural'

But perhaps the most noticeable difference between the two rock universes are the disk jockeys. While the practitioners of both eras can be characterized by high-energy presentation, awash in gimmickry and outrageous goings-on between the records

(holy writ from the earliest Top 40 theology), pilots of the 1988 airwaves come off more "natural."

Yet despite the noteworthy differences between the 1988 and 1958 format models, Top 40 Radio's essential framework remains intact. The cherished dogmas are still firmly in place: don't "break format;" no dead air; play the hits; repeat the hits; keep the pizzazz machine cranked up; keep the listener involved (lotsa contest and promotions); make the station fun to listen to; and above all, keep it simple, please.

So it was in those thrilling days of Top 40 yesteryear. But it didn't come easy, radio friends. Consider the media picture when television took over as the mass home entertainment gadget.

Many radio station proprietors spent the late 1940s and early 1950s scurrying about, needling their Washington consulting engineers and legal counsel and lobbying the FCC and their congressmen, trying to land one of the scarce television licenses.

While none of the lords of broadcasting (most of whom had network affiliations) had to seek admission to an almshouse, the great profits of the war- and post-war years were fading fast. Radio program schedules were a mish-mash of diminishing soap operas, low-budget dramatic offerings, name stars turned deejay, soundtracks of tv musical shows, with the gaps filled in by local record spinners.

Differentiating From TV

Gordon McClendon (KLIF Dallas) and Todd Storz (KOWH Omaha) independently in the early '50s started experimenting with the idea that radio could survive and even thrive on all-day, all-night musical fare (with some news, weather and public service thrown in), and forget variety, drama, comedy.

Through the rest of the '50s, the two pioneers bought more stations (mostly rundown operations), fine tuning them as they went along. Nothing is more vulnerable to copycatting in mediaworld than a radio format; so around the country, station operators began renting motel rooms in McClendon's and Storz' markets to do some serious taping.

Sincerest Form Of Flattery

Meanwhile, acolytes from the founding fathers' camps were leaving their preceptors, taking all the inside stuff about Top 40 with them, selling the concept to old line establishmentarian licensees. The clones were often more

dominant than the originals as they sprang up across the dial.

In 1958 the Top 40 fraternity could rightly declare, "Radio is the midwife that has delivered rock 'n' roll to middle America!"

Discord, however, was soon waiting through the broadcasting and musical worlds. Alarums, excursions and intense kvetching mounted as young America clutched rock 'n' roll (and the stations that played it) to its heart. Early in 1958, in a broadcasters' convention speech "The Great Abdication," Mitch Miller, then Columbia Records a&r director, spoke for all dissenters:

"To say you've grossly mishandled this great fat money maker — radio — would be understating the case ... You carefully built yourself into the monarchs of radio and abdicated to the corner record shop (and) to the pre-shave crowd."

Miller was obviously a voice crying in the wilderness. Through the 1960s, the infusion of the Motown Sound, folk rock, good time rock, surf rock and the largesse of the "British Invasion" into the pop music mainstream only reinforced Top 40 Radio's popularity; alas, so much so that it ultimately became one of the most imitated schticks in showbiz history.

By decade's end, the format had become a caricature of itself throughout radioland.

Then came Tom Donahue, FM rock pioneer. KMPX-FM San Francisco was his crucible, and from then on, the FM spectrum became radio's musical playpen.

Through the next dozen or so years, hundreds of new FMers came on the air offering an eclectic choice of "safe," predictable material.

Still, FM listening soared over AM tuning-in by staggering margins. Meanwhile, some broadcasters raised copycatting to a new art form. In some major markets, as many as four versions of the same format appeared on the dial. The Saturating of Frequency Modulation was complete. In Yogiesque, "it was deja vu all over again."

But then to the rescue — what else? — Top 40! Yep, no sooner had the Gipper ridden into town to get gov'tment off our backs, than a revived Top 40 format began riding the nation's megahertz again, shaking things up just like it did a generation ago.

It's still feisty, brash, sassy, provocative, exciting. Radio needs that.

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Salute to CBS Radio

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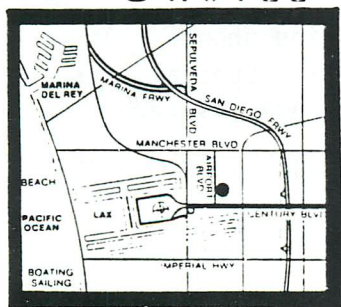
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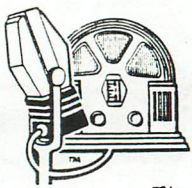
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FOR INFORMATION WRITE:

SPERDVAC, BOX 1587, HOLLYWOOD, CA. 90078

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1988 SPERDVAC Convention

The fifth annual SPERDVAC Old Time Radio Convention will be held Friday, November 11 (Veteran's Day) and Saturday, November 12 at the Viscount Hotel located near Los Angeles International Airport. This year SPERDVAC's focus will be "A Salute to CBS Radio." From the beginnings of the network to the end of radio's "Golden Age," SPERDVAC will examine CBS Radio with workshops and recreations of those well-remembered shows featuring many of the era's top performers.

Admission for the complete two day convention is \$65. (Registration and the Dealers' Room open at 2 PM Friday with a no-host bar beginning at 6:30 PM and the dinner and program at 7:30 PM. On Saturday, the Dealers' Room reopens at 9 AM and the first workshop of the day will also begin at that time. The convention will conclude at about 10:30 PM Saturday.)

For those unable to attend the entire convention, these are the individual event rates: Friday evening sit-down dinner and program: \$25; Saturday daytime workshops: \$15 (There will be no formal lunch served. Meals will be available at the Viscount and at nearby restaurants.); Saturday evening banquet and program recreation: \$30.

Dealers' tables will be available for those who wish to sell radio-related items. (Unauthorized sales of radio broadcasts are prohibited.) Dealer tables are available for \$30 each. Dealers wishing to attend events outside the Dealers' Room must register for those events. To reserve a dealer table, contact Catherine Passarelli at 10615 Butterfield Road, Los Angeles, CA 90064. The Dealers' Room will be open Friday 2-6 PM and Saturday 9 AM - 6 PM.

The Viscount Hotel has accommodations available for those who wish to stay overnight. The Special SPERDVAC Convention rate is \$56 per night per room. (With the 12% bed tax, the total rate is \$62.72 per room each night.) The Viscount also offers a special \$1 per day parking rate for those who specify they are attending SPERDVAC's convention. However, parking is free with ticket validation for those who stay overnight. Shuttle service from Los Angeles International Airport is available free by phoning the Viscount from the airport. To take advantage of these reduced rates, contact the Viscount Hotel directly and specify you are attending the SPERDVAC Convention. Make reservations by calling the Viscount at (213) 645-4600. Their address is 9750 Airport Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90045.

SPERDVAC 1988 OLD TIME RADIO CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

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Address _____ City _____
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Friday and/or Saturday meal seating: ☐ Smoking ☐ Non-smoking ☐ Special Diet *
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CONVENTION RATES:

1. Complete Convention package (Nov. 11 and 12): \$65.00 _____
2. Friday evening recreation and dinner: \$25.00 _____
3. Saturday daytime programs (9 AM to 5 PM) \$15.00 _____
4. Saturday evening recreation and banquet: \$30.00 _____

Please make checks or money orders payable to SPERDVAC. Mail to: SPERDVAC Convention, c/o Chester Allen, 13415 Egbert St., Sylmar, CA 91342. For additional details, contact convention chairman Larry Gassman at (213) 947-9800.

*If you wish to be seated with specified guests, please send all of the reservations together in one envelope.

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Anthony Slide

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Anthony Slide

Before television, even before the talking film, there was radio. The first commercial programming hit the airwaves in 1922. By 1931, reviews of countless star-studded broadcasts regularly appeared beside those of movies and Broadway plays: the golden age of radio had begun. Yet, some twenty years later, after the advent of television, the wit, the drama, the exciting live broadcasts of great music and sparkling repartee—all had vanished.

Now Anthony Slide, distinguished historian of American entertainment, has assembled 239 stunning photographs that bring back to life the all-too-brief golden era of radio broadcasting. This gallery of familiar and unfamiliar faces—portraying nearly every important radio personality—is complemented by full biographical captions that recall the colorful history of live broadcasting and are as full of surprises as the old programs themselves.

You will discover or recall with nostalgia the familiar greetings once available at the flick of a dial: Rudy Vallee's "Heigh-ho, everybody!" or perhaps Walter Winchell's electrifying appeal to "Mr. and Mrs. North America and all ships at sea." Here also are the famous tags, amusing catchphrases by which many otherwise forgotten personalities are still remembered, among them Ben Bernie's "Yowsah, yowsah, yowsah" and Joe Penner's "Wanna buy a duck?" You will also find many colorful performers that few remember today, like the Clicquot Club Eskimos, Whispering Jack Smith, Stoopnagle and Budd, Parkyakarkus and Ish Kabibble. But most of all, you will find the great talents who have not been forgotten.

In its prime, radio broadcasting offered riveting dramatic performances that rivaled those on stage and screen, displays of comic genius as hilarious as anything in vaudeville, outstanding live concerts, and a ceaseless stream of stirring reportage and fascinating conversation. Most of the immortal personalities who made all this possible are portrayed here, together with notes on their broadcasting successes. Among the profusion of great comedians, vocalists, announcers, newscasters, and multitalented personalities who defy categorization are Burns and Allen, Al Jolson, Edward R. Murrow, Orson Welles, Fibber McGee and Molly, Edgar Bergen, the Andrews Sisters, Arthur Godfrey, Arturo Toscanini, Fred Allen, Cab Calloway, Gertrude Berg—even President Franklin D. Roosevelt—and dozens more, as well as many now-faded figures who will pique the memory of radio buffs.

The last of the great broadcasts are gone. But now, with this outstanding collection, you can preserve the immortal moments and the faces that match the unforgettable voices of this unique episode in the history of American entertainment.

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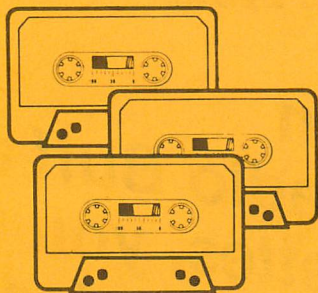
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C-10	.76	.70	.58	.69	.54	.53	.62	.57	.51	.47	.42	.38				
C-15	.78	.73	.61	.71	.66	.55	.64	.59	.53	.49	.44	.40				
C-20	.80	.75	.63	.73	.68	.57	.66	.61	.55	.51	.46	.42				
C-30	.86	.80	.67	.78	.73	.61	.70	.65	.59	.55	.50	.45	C-32	50	46	42
C-40	1.00	.88	.76	.91	.80	.69	.73	.68	.63	.58	.53	.48	C-47	55	50	46
C-45	1.05	.94	.78	.95	.85	.71	.75	.70	.65	.60	.55	.50				
C-50	1.10	.99	.88	1.00	.90	.80	.77	.72	.67	.62	.57	.52	C-62	60	55	50
C-60	1.16	1.10	.92	1.05	1.00	.84	.80	.76	.70	.65	.61	.55				
C-70	1.32	1.21	1.10	1.20	1.10	1.00	.92	.87	.80	.77	.72	.65				
C-80	1.43	1.32	1.19	1.30	1.20	1.08	.97	.92	.85	.82	.77	.70				
C-90	1.60	1.49	1.27	1.45	1.35	1.15	1.05	.98	.90	.88	.83	.75	C-92	70	65	60
C-100										1.35	1.18	1.05				
C-110										1.40	1.23	1.10				
C-120										1.45	1.27	1.15	C-122	1.25	1.10	.95

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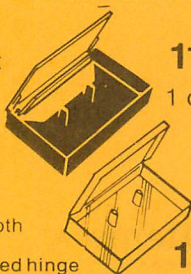
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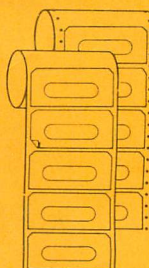
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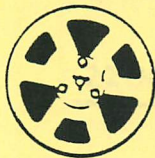


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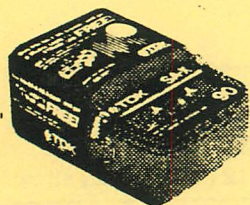
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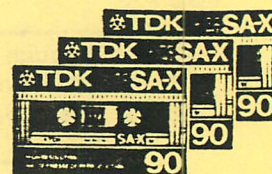
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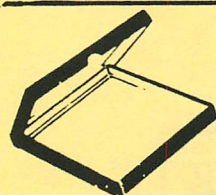
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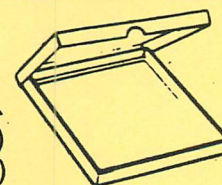
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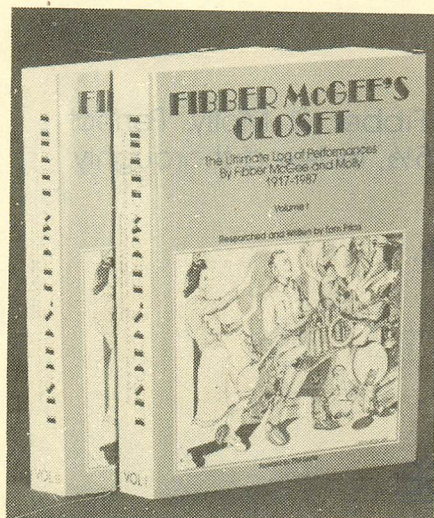
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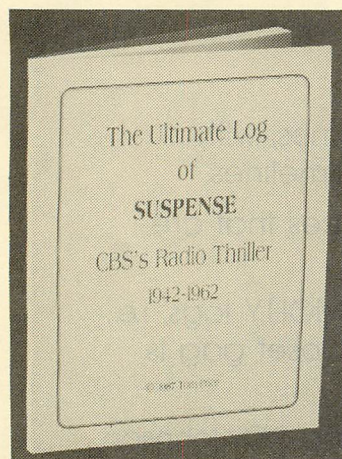
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